

**DR. SOUTHARD SURPRISED WITH 15-YEAR PIN**  
**By Kumar Menon, MSPA, Community & Government Relations,**  
**Office of the Director**



Part of the pleasure of serving as the Director of the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) is that one gets to present people with service awards and other recognitions. For once, our Director, Dr. Marvin Southard, had the tables turned on him when Dr. Robin Kay, our Chief Deputy Director, Dr. Roderick Shaner, our Medical Director, and the rest of the Executive Management Team surprised him last week with the official pin to mark his 15 years of service with Los Angeles County. It so happens his 15 years of county service coincides with his duration as the Director of Mental Health, which is considered the longest in the county for a mental health director.

Dr. Southard joined LACDMH as the director in 1998, having previously served in a similar capacity for five years in Kern County, California. During his tenure, LACDMH experienced a 286% growth from a gross budget of \$495+ million in fiscal year 1997-98 to \$1.9+ billion in fiscal year 2012-13. LACDMH marked several milestones with Dr. Southard at the helm: the Medi-Cal outpatient consolidation, the rapid EPSDT expansion, the launch of the Comprehensive Community Care strategic plan and geographic initiatives, the launch of the Performance Enhancement and Quality Improvement Council (pre-cursor to the countywide Quality Improvement Council) and performance measurement, the creation of Emergency Outreach, Older Adults System of Care and Transition Age Youth System of Care bureaus, the introduction of the “recovery model”, the standardized screening for co-occurring substance use disorders, switch from the MIS to the IS and the launch of the IBHIS project, the launch of the Mental Health Services Act, the creation and use of entry-level positions for people with lived experience, the launch of the Mental Health and Spirituality Initiative and its related

conference, the start of NAMI Walks Los Angeles County, the initiation of e-News, the launch of the Staff Advisory Committee, and many, many more accomplishments, and much more to come.

His tenure has also enjoyed numerous accolades received by the Department, its programs and staff, including awards from the National Association of Counties, the National Network of Social Work Managers, the California State Association of Counties, the Los Angeles County Quality and Productivity Commission, the Los Angeles County Mental Health Commission and the Los Angeles County STARS, among others. He was also recognized for his dedication and leadership with the following awards:

- A 2012 Distinguished Alumnus of St. John's Seminary, Camarillo, California, for his career-long service to people with mental illness and for leading the Los Angeles County public mental health system to recognize and support the spiritual dimensions of individuals as part of their mental health recovery.
- The 2008 National Network for Social Work Managers Exemplar Award for outstanding achievement.
- The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) 2006 Social Worker of the Year – California Chapter.
- The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) 2003 Award for Excellence in Community Mental Health Services, in recognition of ongoing efforts to building a comprehensive community care mental health system in Los Angeles County.
- The 2003 Tom Bradley Equal Opportunity Award from the Los Angeles Metro Chapter of the American Society of Public Administration.
- The UCLA Social Welfare Alumni Association's 2000 Alumnus of the Year

Our congratulations and best wishes to Dr. Southard for 15 years of county service and our sincere appreciation for his ongoing leadership.